requiring to be replaced by overbridges or subways. The matter is separately under examination in consultation with the Railway Administration and the Chief Engineer (Highways).

Superannuation of the Conservator of Forests

* 88 *Q*.—*S*x) M. KALAYANASUNDARAM AND SRI V. R. KRISHNA AYYAR: Will the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture be pleased to state—

(*a*) when the present incumbent of the post of the Conservator of Forests reached the age of superannuation; and

(*b*) the reasons for not allowing him to retire fiom service so far?

THE HON SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: (*a*) The Hon. Members obviously refer to the Chief Conservator of Forests, Sri S. K. Basu, I.F.S., who attained the age of superannuation on 7th April 1955.

(*b*) Sri Basu retired from service with effect from 7th April 1955 but he has been re-employed by the Government for a period up to 30th September 1956 as there is a dearth of senior and experienced officers to hold key posts in the Forst Department.

SRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: Sir, what is the qualification prescribed for the post of the Chief Conservator of Forests, and may I know whether the next senior man possesses that qualification or not?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: Sir, it is not merely the technical qualifications that are to be taken into account when selecting an officer to the head of a technical department like the Forest Department. In a question of his administrative ability, his aptitude, and his other capacities. And when we looked into all these, the Government felt that it would be better in the interests of forest administration that this retiring officer should continue for some time more.

SRI K. KUNHI MOHAMED SHAFEE: Sir, what are the other higher posts which require senior officers and for which there is a dearth of officers?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: I can now answer only for the Forest Department. There is of course the Public Works Department. Even there, there is a dearth of technical personnel.

SRI M. NARAYANA KURUP: Sir, have the Government in the meantime found out any other officer of equal ability to supplant this experienced officer i nthe course of this one year?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: Sir, when this officer's term expires on the 30th September, Government will find, whether the incumbent is of equal merit or not, the best officer

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available for filling up the post. I may also add for the information of hon. Members that the term of another officer just below this officer, who is a Malayali, is also extended like this for more than a year.

Sri M. NARAYANA KURUP : Sir, I did not put my previous question because the Officer was a Malayalee or a Tamilian. I merely wanted to know the principle followed in this matter. So, I feel that the Hon. Minister's observation in this regard is not in good taste. 9-30 a.m.

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : I do not know about tastes. I simply wanted to point out that there was no discrimination in the matter between one officer and another.

Sri M. KALYANASUNDARAM : Sir, I am not concerned whether the Officer was a North Indian or South Indian or whether he was a Tamilian or a Malayalee. I am only concerned with the fact that he is a human-being. To my first question, the Hon. Minister replied that there was dearth of qualified persons in the department. Later on, he said that it is not merely educational qualification but also experience has to be taken into consideration. My information is that there are officers who have been working in the department, who have sufficient experience and good qualifications also. May I know why their cases should not be considered?

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : Barring this Chief Conservator, there are Conservators working under him. The next seniormost Conservator is one I have referred to in my previous answer. He also attains superannuation. Below them, there are Conservators who have not even two years' service.

Foreign markets for hides and skins

* 89 *Q.*—Sri M. KALYANASUNDARAM : Will the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture be pleased to state whether the Government have made any proposal to the Union Government for finding foreign markets for the export of hides and skins?

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : No, Sir, as the Union Government are themselves taking steps for the promotion of export.

Export of rice to Ceylon

* 90 *Q.*—Sri N. K. PALANISAMY : Will the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether there is any proposal to export rice to Ceylon from this State; and

(*b*) if so, the quantity and the rate of the same?

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : (*a*) No, Sir.

(*b*) Does not arise.